

YOUR WEEK IN CHINA'S CAPITAL

今日北京

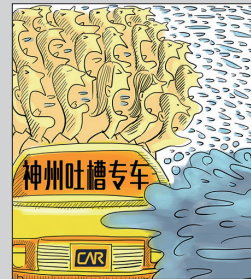
BEIJING TODAY

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Gov Lifts Price Caps on Medicine

China's top economic planner is lifting the limits on drug prices. **Page 4**

Shenzhou's Scheme a Viral Marketing Win

Shenzhou Car leveraged fickle netizens in its epic anti-Uber smear campaign. **Page 5**

Schools Blind to Unsighted Needs

Great Gaokao scores open few doors for China's blind students. **Page 6**

Crackdown on Drugs

With 3,400 busts and 3,300 arrests in the last year, Beijing seems serious about addressing the drug situation.

City police recently destroyed a 630 kilogram stash containing heroin, meth, hash, cocaine, poppy shells, ketamine, MDMA, methadone and magu. **Page 2**

Hangzhou Man Robs 200 Graves in 2 Months

BY WANG LINGXIAO

Police in Jiande, Hangzhou arrested a grave robber who visited the local cemeteries every day and emptied more than 200 tombs in two months on June 24.

Police received several calls about suspected grave robbing at cemeteries in Meicheng, Qiantan, Qintang, Xin Anjiang and Tonglu from the end of May.

The grave robber identified by surveillance footage and a bus driver was a 30-year old man surnamed Li from Henan province. He married a woman in Jiande in 2009 and divorced in 2012.

After the divorce, Li remained alone in Gujia Village, Meicheng Town where

he had no stable job or income. Villagers were surprised how Li suddenly became rich in early May.

Surveillance footage showed Li wandering into Longshan Cemetery in Meicheng in late April. When he found a tomb with a lever, he broke the seal and took out the casket. He reportedly found more than 10 coins inside.

Li used the coins to buy a screwdrivers. The returned to Longshan Cemetery, where he stole a pair of gold earrings off a corpse on his first night.

After being arrested, Li told police he visited more than 10 cemeteries in succession. He said he didn't remember the

exact number of the tombs he robbed, but that it was at least 200.

All together, Li's grave robbing efforts earned only several thousand yuan.

"I thought of it a safe way to earn money since I snuck into the tombs at midnight," Li said. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



CHINESE STOCK INDEXES

SSE (Shanghai)

Close	Change	YTD
3,912.77	▼140.93 (3.48%)	+96.16%

SZSE (Shenzhen)

Close	Change	YTD
12,924.19	▼726.63 (5.32%)	+78.60%

HSI (Hong Kong)

Close	Change	YTD
26,282.32	▲32.29 (0.12%)	+15.28%

Accurate to market close on July 2, 2015





CFP Photos

Toll Roads Announce 8 Bln Yuan Deficit in 2014

BY WANG YAN

The expensive cost of highway access is a common complaint for Chinese drivers. But in spite of the country's notoriously high road fees, the capital's toll roads registered an 8.06 billion yuan loss in 2014.

The report by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport showed that toll roads collected 6.99 billion

yuan in revenue in 2014.

However, the cost to build and maintain the roads reached 15.05 billion yuan in that same year.

While highway toll roads registered an 8.08 billion yuan deficit, first-class roads had a 20 million yuan surplus, the report said.

As much as 95 percent of that revenue came from highway tolls. First-class

roads accounted for only 4.3 percent, or 300 million yuan.

According to the report, 11.88 billion yuan of the expenses were spent on repaying the road companies' loans.

About 1.15 billion yuan was spent on road maintenance while 1.75 billion yuan was spent on operations and management. Around 900 million yuan in road tolls were waived in 2014, according to the report.

Holiday waivers accounted for 380 million yuan; military vehicles for 330 million yuan; and farm produce vehicles the remaining 190 million yuan.

By the end of 2014, Beijing invested 97.43 billion yuan on road construction, according to the report.

But the majority of these roads were built using bank loans. The debt gap has grown over time, with the capital's road debt valued at 58.9 billion yuan. ■



Beijing Offers Tax Rebate to Overseas Tourists

BY WANG YAN

Starting July 1, international tourists can claim value-added tax refunds on purchases made in Beijing.

Tourists from foreign countries, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan who have lived on the Chinese mainland for no more than 183 days will be eligible for a rebate of 11 percent on consumer goods bought at designated department stores, according to guidelines from the Beijing Municipal Commission of Commerce.

The minimum purchase to qualify for a tax refund is 500 yuan (\$80.60) spent at any one store in a day. The purchases must be made 90 days prior to one's departure. Beijing has 86 designated tax-refund stores.

Eligible stores must charge value-added tax, be capable of issuing a taxpayer credit and be willing to adopt the electronic VAT invoice system.

The new plan aims to formalize commerce among China's brick-and-mortar businesses. But many experts argue that the biggest problem the policy faces is that foreign tourists, unlike their Chinese counterparts who visit overseas destinations, do not come to China to buy well-known brands.

Instead they tend to spend money in smaller stores such as the famous Silk Market, where businesses do not offer tax receipts.

Visitors who plan to get the VAT refund on their purchases in designated stores should immediately tell their retailer that they wish to get a refund and ask for the necessary document.

These must be taken to a customs office, which will verify and stamp the documents. The next step is to apply to a designated tax-refund agency or other institution set up by tax authorities for this purpose.

Tax-refund agencies will then declare the goods to the tax authorities and claim a refund within one month.

The city plans to open refund agencies at Terminals 2 and 3 of Beijing Capital International Airport. ■

Local Police Step Up Anti-Drug Action

BY DIAO DIAO

Beijing's Anti Drug Office and the Information Office of Beijing announced 3,400 drug busts and 3,300 arrests during the last year, marking a 50 percent increase in drug crime since 2013.

More than 150,000 people use drugs in Beijing, police said at the June 24 release. More than 100 teens have been arrested while using drugs, as well as 10 celebrities and 80 foreigners.

While heroin-related crimes were down by 20 percent, methamphetamine use is up 65 percent. Many of the cases involve transactions of a kilo or more of high purity meth.

Many more drugs are appearing on the Beijing market.

On June 9, Beijing police destroyed 630 kilograms of drugs including 112



kilograms of heroin, 114 kilograms of meth, 118 kilograms of hash, 31 kilograms of cocaine and 15 kilograms of poppy shells.

Police also recovered more than 70 kilograms of ketamine, MDMA, caffeine,

methadone and "magu," a mixed stimulant containing both meth and caffeine.

Drug use has caused car accidents, rape, murder and robbery, police said. Express delivery services and the Internet are being used to settle many drug deals, police said.

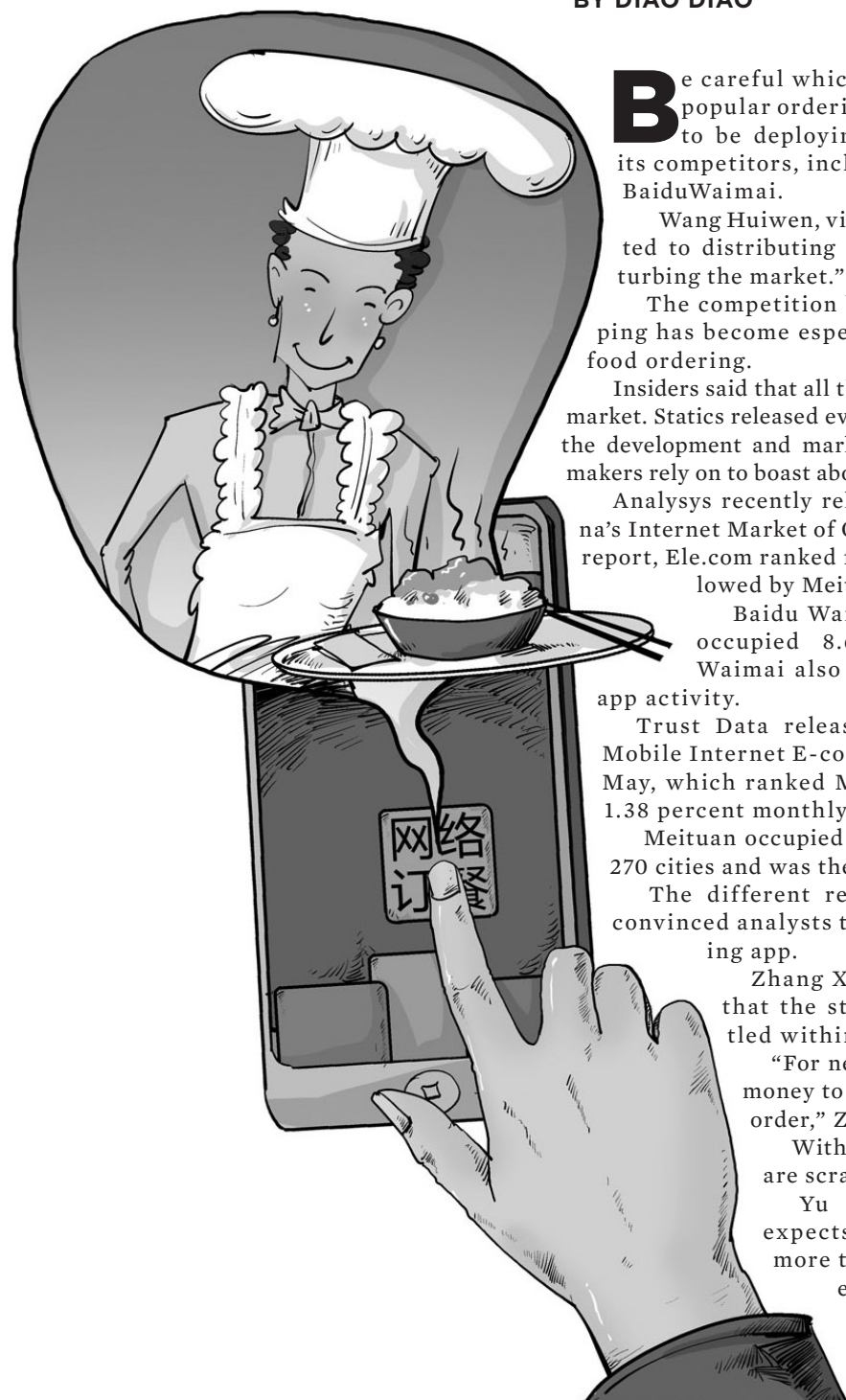
National Drug Control Commission Office opened an official WeChat public account for citizens to report suspected drug use. The public account is also intended to educate young people about the serious consequences of drug use.

The account has three sections including introductions to different kinds of dangerous drugs, drug control services and drug control actions.

All are linked with websites and other social media accounts of drug control departments across the nation. ■

Food Apps in Fierce Competition

BY DIAO DIAO



Be careful which food ordering apps you install. The popular ordering app Meituan was recently revealed to be deploying malware that deleted the apps of its competitors, including Ele.me, Dazhong Dianping and BaiduWaimai.

Wang Huiwen, vice president of Meituan Waimai, admitted to distributing the malware and apologized for “disturbing the market.”

The competition between Meituan and Dazhong Dianping has become especially fierce with the boom in online food ordering.

Insiders said that all the apps are desperate to strengthen their market. Statics released every season by different companies reveal the development and market of online food apps, which the app makers rely on to boast about their business coverage.

Analysys recently released its first quarter Report on China's Internet Market of Online Food Ordering. According to the report, Ele.com ranked first with 40 percent of the market, followed by Meituan Waimai with 34.2 percent.

Baidu Waimai, which entered the market later, occupied 8.65 percent; ele.com and Meituan Waimai also ranked among the Top 2 in terms of app activity.

Trust Data released its own development report on Mobile Internet E-commerce Applications from January to May, which ranked Meituan Waimai first according to its 1.38 percent monthly coverage.

Meituan occupied more than half of the market, covered 270 cities and was the largest food app, Trust Data said.

The different results have confused customers and convinced analysts that 2015 is the year of the food ordering app.

Zhang Xuhao, CEO of ele.com, said in August that the structure of the market would be settled within its first year.

“For new comers, it will take more effort and money to get started once the market has a clear order,” Zhang said.

With the one-year point looming, app makers are scrambling to secure their positions.

Yu Bin, an Internet analyst, said he expects the fierce competition to last no more than six months as the service providers are spending too much money with no profit. The next step may be partnerships and mergers, he said. ■

City Seizes 364 Fake Taxi in First Half of Year

BY QU CHAONAN

Beijing Traffic Law Enforcement Team announced the capture of 364 fake taxis during the first six months of the year on June 25.

Most fake taxis were refitted from scrapped taxicabs, but with hacked meters that levied higher fares than normal cars.

Most were active in up-market commercial districts and rural-urban fringe zones between 10 pm and dawn, police said.

“Fake taxi drivers print fake tax invoices and use modified taximeters which gouge their passengers. What's more, they don't obey the traffic rules,” said Wang Zhen, director of the Seventh Beijing Traffic Law Enforcement Team.



CFP Photos

A man surnamed Liu said he used Kuaidi Dache to hire a taxi, but the driver took a deliberate detour to raise the fare. Liu said he only discovered the license plate did not match the invoice after he left the car.

In November, a woman surnamed

Liu said she took a fake taxi home from the airport with her friends. When they got out to fetch their luggage, the driver sped off and left.

The fake taxis revealed by Beijing Traffic Law Enforcement Team on June 25 were fitted with lighted logos and Beijing B license plates.

Drivers advised customers to beware of cars that lacked a logo or which had a blurry typeface on their top light.

The department caught 1,126 fake taxi in 2013 and 1,164 in 2014.

As many as 230 fake taxi drivers were jailed and fined a combined 1.19 million yuan during the first six months of the year. ■

(Qu Chaonan is an intern at Beijing Today.)

THE WEEK IN WEIRD

STRANGE HAPPENINGS ON THE CHINESE NEWS WIRE
BY SU DERUI

Hunan Husbands form Pimp Club with Wives

Unsatisfied with years of stagnant wages and no opportunities for career advancement, a Hunan province man surnamed Shu and his friend decide to take their wives on a hooking tour.

Together with 10 other women, the men began a pimping trip through the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou and Gansu.

They were ultimately arrested in Lanzhou, when a fight broke out after one of their clients realized he had been robbed.

Shu fled and managed to return home to Hunan. He was arrested a month later and extradited to Lanzhou to face criminal charges.

(Tencent News)

Beijing's Mantou, Now With 30% More Potato?

If your next batch of supermarket mantou tastes funny, it might be because they're packing the power of potatoes.

The new potato-based mantou buns are being sold at a price of 5.8 yuan for three, almost double the cost of more traditional flour-based mantou.

The buns are easily identified by their yellow color and wrinkled texture. They are also much drier than traditional steamed buns.

There are also plans to launch potato-based bean paste buns, huajuan and date cakes.

(Tencent News)

Man Smashes ATM While Seeking Web Addiction Cure

Rather than pay for a stay in one of China's spooky Internet addiction camps, a 23-year-old man from Hubei province surnamed Ceng found a shortcut.

Ceng pulled a knife in an ATM box in Wenzhou and smashed its screen with a brick, disabling the machine in a bid to earn some much-needed jail time.

Having spent the last of his money at an Internet bar on the morning of June 19, Ceng decided jail would be the only cure for his addictive behavior.

Police said Ceng would be detained for 14 days.

(ThePaper.cn)

New Platform Ranks Destinations by their Toilets

The China Tourist Attractions Association and other organizations have pooled all their resources to solve one of the most pressing concerns of all would-be adventurers: where to take a dump.

The new database offers information on restroom conditions at select destinations across the country and allows toilet users to weigh in and rank the quality of each crapper.

The first 100 restroom facilities are already up for ranking, and the service said it will cover the majority of China's scenic areas by 2017.

(The Paper.cn)



Photo by CFP

Removal of Drug Price Caps Gov's First Step to Reform

BY YANG XIN

It's hard to say that China's ongoing battle to rein in high drug prices has been a success. The high prices of many necessary medicines have put lifesaving treatments well beyond the means of the average insured citizen.

So it came as a surprise when the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China's top economic planner, and the National Health and Family Planning Commission announced that the government would halt its price controls on all medicines other than anesthetics and grade-one psychiatric medications from June 1.

The move is the first step in what is being pitched as "market-oriented reforms for the pharmaceutical industry," which the government said will keep medical costs in check.

Analysts have been less optimistic.

Defective Pricing Method

"The government's lifting of price caps is extremely limited in its real effect. The separate drug dispensing process is the real determining factor in the price of drugs," said Wang Chao (pseudonym), a senior marketing specialist in the pharmaceuticals industry in an interview with *Legal Weekly*.

Hospitals are the final point of sale for 75 percent of all medicine sold in China. The retail market accounts for less than a quarter of all sales.

The journey drugs make from manufacturer to patient is extremely complicated and seems designed to leave room for price manipulation.

At the first stage, the national government delegates the centralized purchase of medication to local health administrative departments. Pharmaceutical manufacturers are entitled to set the price independently and submit their pricing and accessing applications to centralized purchasing centers governed by provincial health departments.

This nebulous government entity neither purchases nor pays for drugs, yet it has full reign over the price of the tens of thousands of drugs available on the market.

Since it's impossible for anyone outside these purchase centers to verify the actual cost of any drugs, manufacturers take no risk even if they submit false declarations of their production costs. A claim of several times the actual cost is considered normal, insiders said.

Public hospitals – the biggest purchasing party – are equally dirty.

According to documents released by the NDRC in 2006, public hospitals are entitled to purchase from manufacturers that are approved by local health administrative departments. They can then resell these drugs to patients at a 15 percent mark-up.

Consequently, most hospitals choose

more expensive drugs where 15 percent can be significant extra revenue.

The bidding prices or retail prices charged by hospitals are already much lower than the price caps set by NDRC, which renders the government's latest announcement completely impotent.

But the NDRC's move may be as a signal of more practical measures to come. Zhang Wensheng, a senior medicine lawyer, said he suspects that "more effective actions" are on their way.

"It won't take long," he said.

Maintenance Medicine

"The incentive to charge high prices will exist as long as the current drug system and doctors' salary system remain unchanged," said Fu Hongpeng, a researcher at the China National Health Development Research Center.

It is beyond question that doctors are largely undervalued in China. *People's Daily* once printed a patient's itemized bill for an appendectomy. The procedure, which cost 7,000 yuan, listed 600 yuan as the surgery fee and 85 yuan as the nursing fee.

The rest of the expenses were for different medicines.

A 2013 editorial in the *Changjiang Times* said public hospitals' revenue can be separated into three parts: fiscal subsidies from the government, medical service charges and drug sales.

In tertiary hospitals, an average

of 50 percent of the revenues comes from drug sales. In secondary hospitals and community hospitals, the figure could exceed 60 percent and 70 percent respectively.

Revenue from drug sales is a major source of income in most hospitals.

"The announcement of such an insignificant policy reveals that reforms to drug pricing will be difficult, and will require the cooperation of many departments and groups," said Gu Xin, a professor at the School of Governance at Peking University.

"There won't be any real change in the pharmaceutical industry in China until a new medical price-setting mechanism is introduced. One where medical insurance plays a bigger role in the drug pricing system," said John Cai, director of the Centre for Health Care Management and Policy at China Europe International Business School.

Possible Solutions

Beijing Friendship Hospital, Beijing Chao-yang Hospital, Beijing Tongren Hospital, Beijing Tian Tan Hospital and Beijing Jishuitan Hospital began trial programs to separate their clinics from their pharmacies in 2012.

The trial projects remove the 15 percent premium rate hospitals can charge on drug sales.

According to a recent report by the *Beijing Times*, the five hospitals have seen a drop in dependence on drug-related revenue from 70 percent to 58.8 percent. For patients, the average medical expenses and drug fees also decreased by 54.84 yuan and 82.85 yuan respectively.

But the trial measures have met with criticism. In a recent report, *Beijing Business Today* said that the program may restrict the unit drug price, but doctors have ways to offset its effect by prescribing more drugs to patients.

"An ideal result of the separation-method should be that doctors earn their salaries from diagnoses, operations, treatments and other medical services with drugs sales shifted to drug stores," said Liu Guoen, director of Peking University China Center for Health Economics Research.

"Balancing drug prices to ensure a certain expenditure is shouldered by patients while maintaining money flow to hospitals and universal healthcare insurance accounts is a very difficult task," said Liang Wannian, director of the Structural Reform Division at National Health and Family Planning Commission at the Euro-China Forum in June.

Other insiders presume that medical insurance will play a role in future drug price reforms.

"A healthcare insurance body should play the role of the main payer. By taking the total cost into control and ordering with flexible quantities, it would be possible to bargain with drug manufacturers and profit," said Shi Lichen, head of the Dingchen Pharmaceutical Management Consulting Center.

Liu Guoen agreed with Shi.

"With nationwide coverage of universal health insurance, insurance institutions are now in position to exercise some bargaining power with drug manufacturers rather than leaving everything up to inefficient administrative controls," Liu said. ■



Photo by CFP

Shenzhou's 'Brain-Dead' Marketing Scheme a Viral Win

BY WANG LINGXIAO

Since the end of last year, private driving services have become part of the work and life cycle for most people in China's big cities. But for drivers of traditional taxis, the arrival of Didi Dache, Kuaidi Dache and Uber have been a headache.

With Uber poised to invest more than \$1 billion in the Chinese market, Shenzhou Car decided to fight back with a celebrity poster series aimed squarely at Uber. The ads featured celebrity actors Wu Xiubo and Hai Qing.

"Not just comfortable, but safe. That's our concept. Thanks for your support! We'll try to offer customers the best and safest experience. Uber, please shut down your black cabs!" Shenzhou wrote on its official Weibo.

The message was forwarded several thousand times, but mainly for the pur-

pose of criticism. In addition to the questionable ethics of exercising such a blatant attack on a competitor, the dubious claims brought the company intense criticism. Many media called Shenzhou's campaign a "brain dead" approach to marketing.

Brain Dead?

Public relations specialists are masters of manipulating opinion – specially the opinion of the media.

While many derided the spread of the posters on social media, they forgot how long it has been since similar ads appeared in elevators or subway trains. It was an attempt by Shenzhou to attack Uber on its home turf: the Internet.

"The way everything played out shows it is the work of a well-coordinated marketing team. Even the people writ-

ing about it as a PR crisis are helping to spread the Shenzhou name online," said Li Donglou, a new media columnist.

After having their news purged from two financial media streams, Shenzhou created several key opinion leader accounts to share opposing views to its own and complete the illusion of a full media buzz and blowback.

Whether you laughed at the ads or spit at the stupidity, Shenzhou's PR team was cheering in secret.

After a blast of criticism, Shenzhou released a letter to apologize for its "inappropriate" ads and began to send out discount coupons.

"This was an amazingly successful marketing plan," said Gu Jia, a We Media writer. "At the very beginning I was curious how Shenzhou would react to people's criticism. The apology letter and discounts showed it won this round."

"It may have ways to go before it can beat Uber, but it succeeded in recapturing users' attention," he said.

Before the ad campaign, few people paid attention to Shenzhou Cars. According to a recent poll by AdMaster, 89 percent of the respondents said they had used Didi in the last three months, while 53 percent and 24 percent said they had used Kuaidi and Uber.

Shenzhou ranked a distant and forgotten fourth.

After the news, Shenzhou Car picked up more than 5 million new downloads within a day. The value of that kind of exposure is hard to quantify.

Viral Marketing

"Rationally speaking, Shenzhou's point view isn't wrong. Uber is a controversial product that is wandering on the edge of regulations. It is competing in the free market and is outside any supervision system," said Zong Ning, an Internet columnist.

If the same operating model was applied in other industry, users might feel less secure.

One would question a surgeon's ability if he were promoting himself through a free-marketing service at cutthroat rates. But in terms of transportation, apps like Kuaidi, Didi and Uber harness idle resources for the public benefit.

"There are few criminal cases involving these cars and we already have laws to handle most disputes that could arise. But if something really bad happened, it would depress the whole industry," Zong said.

Uber's insecurity comes from operating in a legal gray area. While Shenzhou's attempt at viral marketing might anger some customers, its negative effects are minimal. Internet audiences have a notoriously limited attention span and memory, and that makes dangerous marketing tactics a calculated and worthwhile risk.

Coupons and vouchers go a long way to help mitigate any ill effects of a bad advertising campaign.

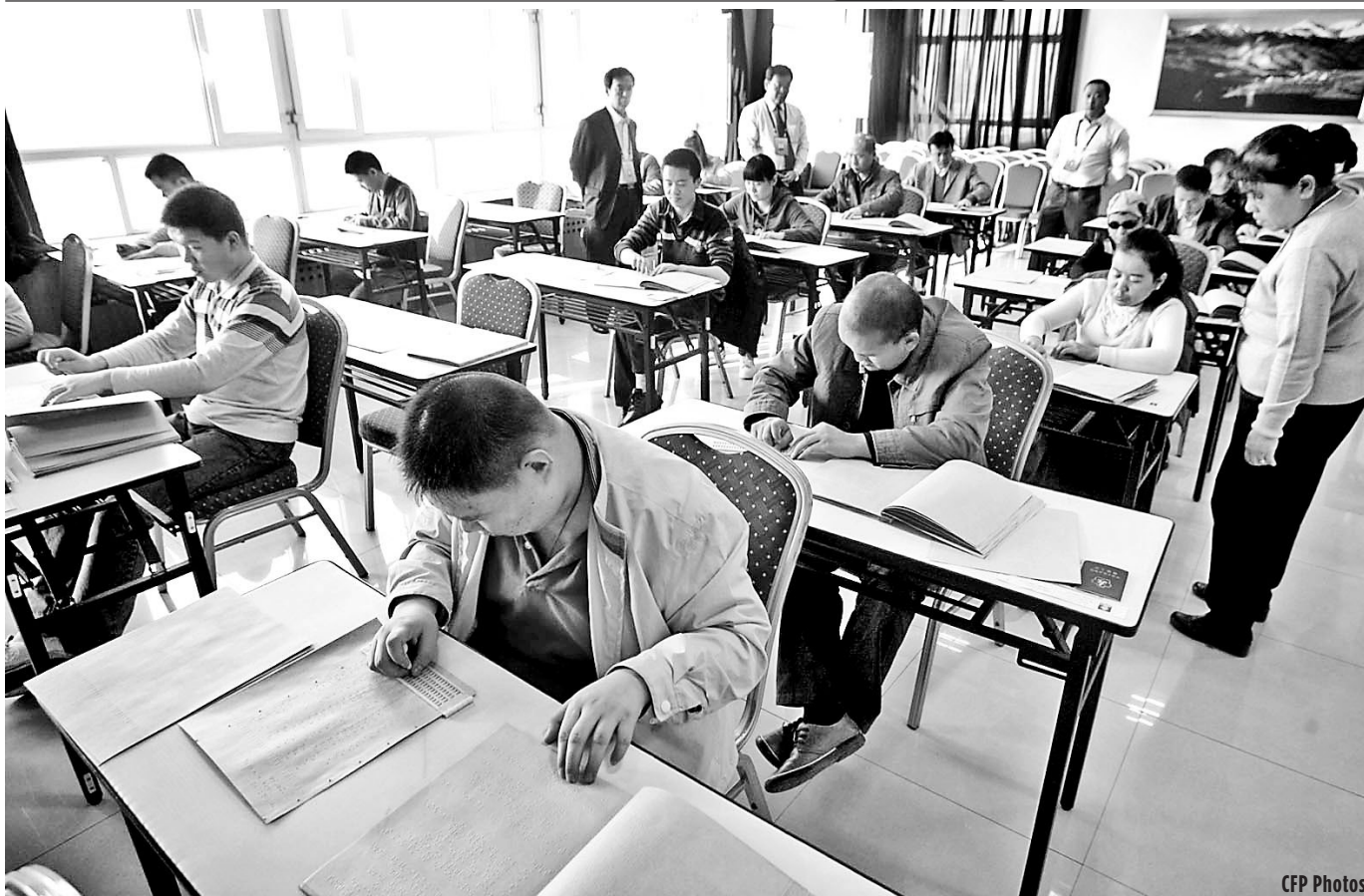
End users have little attachment to platforms such as Didi, Uber and Shenzhou. They only want the cheapest, fastest and most convenient service, Zong said.

But the war between Shenzhou and Uber has drawn attention to another little known fact. The CEO of Didi Dache is Liu Qing, the daughter of Liu Chuanzhi, Lenovo's previous CEO. The head of Uber in China is Liu Chuanzhi's niece Liu Zhen. Shenzhou's main investor is also tied to Lenovo.

From one viewpoint, the battles between China's top taxi booking apps resemble Lenovo's own internal family conflict.

"Though there are many things that need to be improved, private cars seem to be the trend. We hope private drivers can coexist with traditional taxi services rather than replace them in the short term," said Yidao, another car booking competitor. ■

(Wang Lingxiao is an intern at Beijing Today.)



CFP Photos

Schools Blind to the Rights and Needs of Unsighted Students

BY YANG XIN

Chinese high-school grads are scrambling to find their scores on the National College Entrance Exams and submit their university applications. But for the millions of blind students in China's high school system, the Gaokao marks both the end of childhood and the end of education.

A report by *The Economist* said China had more than 17 million visually impaired people in 2013. Of these, only seven sat this year's Gaokao, and that's up from just three students last year.

Among the Less Fortunate

For blind students, passing the gateway to higher education is almost impossible.

The National Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons has guaranteed blind people the right to take public exams since 2008. Nevertheless, it wasn't until 2014 that the Ministry of Education offered gaokao in Braille or electronic formats.

Previously, the only way blind students could be accepted into college was through independent examination and enrollment.

Each March and April, as many as 100 visually impaired high school students gathered at the Special Education College of Beijing Union University to take part in a customized 'Gaokao.'

But even for those who pass, only 10 Chinese colleges are willing to accept students with visual impairments. Of those



10, only Beijing Union University, Changchun University and Binzhou Medical University recruit nationwide.

At college, blind students are only allowed to pick between studies in acupuncture and massage, music and physical therapy. Most of the students bow to fate choose to study acupuncture and massage.

"You are told from your first year of elementary school that the world only has one place for blind people: the massage parlor," said Chao Xinyin, a blind student from Guangzhou.

In recent days, domestic media have swarmed around Zheng Rongquan, one of the seven blind exam candidates in Zhejiang province who scored an impressive 570

points on the National College Entrance Exam. He achieved an almost perfect score on its math section.

While relatives and friends flocked to congratulate Zheng, he and his family privately feared it would be impossible to find a domestic university willing to accept him.

Xiao Yun is another graduate of a local high school for the blind in Guangzhou. It was not until her middle school graduation that she realized massage was her only option.

"I couldn't keep up with my classmates at the normal public school. I fell behind in both classes and exams. People like us have no choice," she said.

"Making the National College Entrance Exam accessible to blind people is meaningless when colleges are not willing to open their doors," said Zhang Lei, vice president of Qingdao School for the Blind.

Deep-Rooted Deficiencies

The problem begins with a core split in the nation's general education and special education systems.

"The existing special education system isolates blind students from their sighted peers from their childhood. They go to very remote middle or high schools specialized for the blind. As a result, they have no idea how to integrate with normal people while normal people do not know how to inter-

act with them either," said Huang Rui, a lawyer in Henan Boyang Law Firm.

"The biggest problem is not that we can't translate or print Braille textbooks. It's that regular universities refuse to provide any teaching resources or Braille textbooks to their blind students," said an education official who refused to be named.

"It's not that simple," said the head of Zhejiang Special Education Training College. "Colleges also have to allocate their teaching resources to provide one-on-one tutoring to blind students and invest in creating campus-wide barrier-free facilities."

"What college is willing to do so much for just one student?" he said.

But Li Qingzhong, chairman of the National Committee for Parents of Children with Visual Impairment, sees that attitude as evidence of a fundamental problem in perception.

"Neither the education department nor colleges seem to take blind people or their right to education seriously," Li said.

But international studies show that blind students benefit from equal treatments. "It is essential that parents and teachers hold blind students to the same standards and give them the same responsibilities as their sighted classmates. The student must be involved in the decisions and choices related to their education," said Ryan Strunk, a graduate from Lincoln, Nebraska, and an American National Federation of the Blind (NFB) scholarship winner.

Blending In

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities took effect in 2008 with China as one of the signatory countries. The convention has made it clear that education for the disabled means "an inclusive education system at all levels."

Li Yanyan's case is an example of blind Chinese people seeking for more opportunities and higher education abroad. Li was admitted to a public American university in 1999.

"In the US, blind students study together with ordinary students. Such a thing would be unimaginable in Chinese colleges, which have always underestimated the abilities of blind students," Li said.

Li did not accept the idea that a lack of Braille textbooks and faculty resources should stop blind students from stepping into college. "With the development of modern technology, blind students do not need special treatment from the school. Actually, most blind students have strong initiative. They have been self-reliant for many years. All they lack is an opportunity," Li said.

Most countries do not offer specialized schools for the blind and admit blind students the same as they would any other. In many countries, blind people can be seen working as lawyers, neurologists, schoolteachers, psychological counselors and diplomats.

"The US has 4,000 blind lawyers," said Li Weihong, chairman of China Blind Person's Association. Blind graduates in the US can choose from as many as 147 occupations, and Germany's vocational training program offers 49 majors for people with disabilities.

Sweden is the cradle of the idea that blind people can blend in. Since 1990, Swedish schools have accepted students with all forms of disabilities and 99 percent of the country's students with disabilities are enrolled in normal schools. ■

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Beautiful New World Reflects on a Generation's Memory

BY QU CHAONAN



Photo by Penghao Theatre



Photo by Goethe-Institut in Beijing

The docudrama *About the Beautiful New World* introduced the oral histories and dreams of ordinary people in China's rapidly changing society during its three-day run from June 26 to 28 at Gulou West Theater.

During the Spring Festival holiday, students from the Department of Drama Literature at the Central Academy of Drama interviewed their grandparents and relatives about their memories, dreams and plans of 50 years ago. The students took to the stage to act out their grandparents' experiences, dreams and feeling.

Videos and music sequences were played during the performance to help viewers imagine and reflect on the era's atmosphere.

Matthias Jochmann, the director, was born in Munich in 1987. In the summer of 2014, Jochmann went to Beijing to rehearse for the drama *About Vanish*. He has been in the country ever since.

"I sensed China and Germany hold very different attitudes toward history and tradition. German self-identity and culture are based on history while Chinese people attach more importance to the future. They even forget to look back and reflect on their achievements," Jochmann said.

"I feel grateful for taking part in the drama. Today's young people spend little time accompanying their parents, let alone their grandparents. Myself is no exception. Thanks to the interview, I have the opportunity to know my grandparents' stories when they were at my age, which make me rethink China's social progress," said Qiu Zhen, one of the student performers.

"Although the performance was simple, I loved the way it used oral history to present the happy and sad times in this beautiful world," said a netizen on Douban.com.

"I am surprised at the older generation's collective memory. It makes me wonder what our collective memory will be. Hopefully something more than bad reality shows," said another viewer who did not give his name.

The performance was organized by the Nanluoguxiang Theater Festival and supported by the Goethe-Institut and the Central Academy of Drama. ■

(Qu Chaonan is an intern at Beijing Today)

Tchaikovsky's Classical Music Revives in Photos

BY YANG XIN

The Beijing Russian Culture Center is celebrating the life of Tchaikovsky with a photo exhibition on the 175th anniversary of the composer's birth.

Born in 1840, Tchaikovsky was a Russian composer whose works included symphonies, concertos, operas, ballets, chamber music and a choral setting of the Russian Orthodox Divine Liturgy. Some of his compositions are among the most popular theatrical music in the classical repertoire, including *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

Tchaikovsky's music has always appealed to the general public with its tuneful, openhearted melodies, impressive harmonies and colorful, picturesque

orchestration, all of which evoke a profound emotional response.

Photos presented at The Lifetime of Tchaikovsky are expected to show the composer's days in boarding school; his teacher Anton Rubinstein at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory; and Nicolas Rubinstein, the composer and pianist who was the first-chair performer in most of Tchaikovsky's works.

Tchaikovsky's manuscripts and scores will also be displayed at the exhibition. These personal objects are the physical embodiment of Tchaikovsky's dialogue with the times.

The anniversary follows the 15th International Tchaikovsky Competition

held in Moscow and Saint Petersburg from June 15 to July 3. As one of the world's most authoritative classical-music competitions, the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition received applicants from 30 countries including Italy, Poland, Finland, South Korea, the US and Germany.

In the past half-century, numerous talented musicians from all over the world have participated in the International Tchaikovsky Competition and opened the door to bright musical lives. This year's competition included three Chinese judges, one of whom was a former contestant.

"More and more Chinese musicians

are being invited to serve as judges at international musical competitions like the International Tchaikovsky Competition. It is a sign that Chinese classical music is gaining more attention in the Western world," *Beijing Youth Daily* said in an editorial.

Relevant photos about the history of International Tchaikovsky Competition will be presented alongside Tchaikovsky's anniversary exhibition. ■

The Lifetime of Tchaikovsky

July 10-29

Russian Culture Center in Beijing, Building 2, 9 Dongzhimen Nei Dajie



OMEGA Offers Beijing's Best Room Escape Challenge

Still spending your weekends glued to the TV or computer screen? OMEGA Room Escape offers English and Chinese puzzles that will challenge your wisdom and test whether you have what it takes to be a real detective.

OMEGA Room Escape offers the perfect combination of escape room puzzles, decorations and service. You don't have to be a fan of takagism puzzles: OMEGA's immersive rooms give newcomers the chance to solve a detective story.

Each room escape challenges a team to escape from a locked chamber within 60 minutes. The concept is simple, but passing the challenges requires wisdom, patience and team spirit. Many of the

rooms are themed according to popular films, such as "Challenge in Hogwarts," "Holy Prison," "Inception" and "Clown's Psychiatric Ward."

Players will never know what challenge they will face before entering. After the game is over, players will never forget what they experience, even if they don't succeed.

OMESCAPE, the brand owner of OMEGA Room Escape, established its first "room escape game" location in 2012, April. It is a pioneer in the Chinese "room escape game" industry and the most reputable chain for live-action escape games in China.

Since its founding, the company has opened branch locations in Chongwenmen, Taiyanggong



and Zhongguancun. The three branches include a puzzle area of 2,500 square meters and have been host to some 200,000 players.

OMESCAPE operates 20 venues across China, one in San Francisco, one in Toronto, and one in Phuket. It is still expanding its business and bringing new games to the "room escape game" industry. ■

(By Shu Pengqian)

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